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MAN IN HISTORY.

A new era in historical researches has been inaugurated in Europe within the last few years, the broad aim of which is to define the actual position of civilization and humanity by a scientific and searching investigation and analysis of the influences of climate, religion, literature, art, politics, occupation, etc., upon the character and development of mankind. This new method of historical study may be traced in the first instance to Immanuel Kant and other great German philosophers, whose teachings, by determining what the human understanding can, and what it cannot do, tend to concentrate mental powers upon realities that were formerly wasted upon intellectual abstractions. It is evident that mental and moral fermentation, unaided by experiences and comprehensiveness of scholarship and thought, dooms man to rave about spheres which transcend the powers of the human understanding, while those regions of investigation which, as the soil for the seed, require only the electric touch of the human mind to yield the most precious fruits, have been left barren and desolate, and have waited but too long for the gatherer of the harvest. The terrible gulf between theology and religion, between art and nature, between fiction and reality, between literature and humanity, between the ideal and the practical, could never have grown to its present formidable proportions if it had not been for this fatal propensity which has blinded the mental eyes of mankind. The darkness about the realities of this world became so great that those who yearned for light, had no other alternative but to seek for it in the deceiving will-o'-the-wisps of heathen and Christian mythology, and the fancy of romancers. Lacking the power and the courage and the wisdom to grapple boldly and discriminately with the elements of life around us, the views entertained about this world reflect, in many instances, the darkness of the ignorance in which they are conceived. This and this alone can explain how so many good and honest creatures love what they style their God so divinely while they detest their fellow-beings so diabolically. How wanting in respect to the master-mind of the Creator of the universe to lay at his feet the incense of this colossal ignorance, to make him, as it were, the recipient of grandiloquent and reckless eulogium, while his own handiwork is daily slighted; and while the grandest embodiment of his creation—man—is treated with such revolting brutality! Reverence for the All-High manifests itself in the true heart by a tender solicitude for all the objects of his solicitude. But how can this religion of all religion be carried into effect as long as the elements and circumstances which mold mankind's destinies are so little understood? The new historic school to which we have referred, imposes upon itself the task of studying these elements and associations. Several works have appeared in Germany within a few years (by Wachsmuth, Klemm, Scherr, Riehl, etc.); endeavoring to illuminate the past, by analyzing the causes which have shaped the course of civilization rather than by merely recording the events and facts which they have produced.

The Germans call this new branch of investigation *Culturgeschichte*, or analytical history of the moral, intellectual, material and general development of peoples. Buckle, in England, labors in the same direction, and a work which has recently appeared in France, *Histoire des classes ouvrières*, or history of the condition of the French working classes in past centuries, may be classed in the same category. The new school in Germany comprises authors who endeavor to throw light upon the actual condition of humanity by investigating politico-economical relations; others apply themselves to daguerreotype the gradual development of the principles of daily intercourse between man and man. Dieterici, the great Berlin statistician, who died recently, was inspired in his labors by the purest philanthropy. He passed his life amidst heaps of tabular statements which record the efforts of commerce in the distribution of materials for feeding and clothing mankind. He realized the conviction that the necessities of life are at the root of the selfishness of man; the compilation of statistics became for him a task hallowed by the noblest religious emotions, for he saw how much we are made to suffer by ignorance or neglect of the laws of nature, and how much we are capable of growing in happiness and virtue by applying all our knowledge and all our wisdom to an elucidation of the common affairs of life. Another German (Meiners) who, lived at an earlier period, was equally inspired by the same laudable ambition. He has written a history of womanhood (*Geschichte der Frauen*), a work which shows that it is with histories of woman as with those of man. They have not yet been written. The books which we have named are only pioneers. Their authors, and we include Buckle, put us in mind of the explorers of a dense forest, whose sight is impeded by the boundless array of trunks of trees, and who can do no more than clear the way for future travellers. Among the classical writers of Germany, we find a similar tendency to investigate more closely the realities of the life of antiquity, as, for instance, in Büchke's history of the public economy of the Athenians. The little which has been done in this direction shows only the much which remains to be done. With the greatest gratitude for the services rendered to the world by the historians who have hitherto chronicled events, we yet cling to the hope that they will soon be superseded by a far higher class of writers. Many of the popular historians of the present century build the structure of their conventional history upon the deceptive basis of some nominal political phraseology and in this way forfeit the substantial regard of thoughtful minds. They endeavor to write with a mind of the 19th, but with the spirit of the 9th century. They are the lay-monks of this era, who only dazzle the imagination of their readers or hearers with the effeminate armor of rhetoric. To the deeply thoughtful and religious mind they seem already obsolete, and many who still cling to them from a painful reluctance of parting with the darling symbols of the past, do so only for the lack of something better. We do not be-

lieve in the possibility of producing a good historical work of a whole nation, until all the component parts of society have been thoroughly investigated. We want histories of merchants, of lawyers, of artists, of scholars, of farmers, of savants, of mechanics, of all sorts of men and women in relation to all sorts of occupations and conditions; all classes of society must be thoroughly historialized in order to pave the way for the possibility of a national or universal history that shall reflect truthfully the realities of this world in all their lights and shadows, in all their bearings, influences, actions, and realities, and in all their causes and effects. Man's destinies are molded by his necessities, by his occupation, by his associations. We must, therefore, have special histories of all the various labors and laborers in all spheres of life. This necessity will produce a new school of thinkers, writers, artists, poets and religionists, which will organize itself in all parts of the civilized world, so as to devote the same attention to the investigation of the doings on earth, which many of them have injudiciously given in the past to dreams and speculations about an incomprehensible future. To heavenize earth is a far more religious task than to earthify heaven.

The intimate relation between history and the fine Arts makes the inauguration of a new era in the one impossible, without determining also a greater originality and thought in the other. The American artist, who is so much less encumbered by the artificialities of an old and still semi-feudal civilization, which overshadows the native independence of his brother in Europe, is, so far, better qualified to study history with advantage to his art; far less sophisticated, his mind is more capable of eliminating the ideal from the gross reality, and of ever keeping in view the thread of humanity, which is the great bond of love of all arts and all histories. We believe that the same tendency, which begins to manifest itself in a more comprehensive treatment of the history of mankind, will eventually culminate in an enlargement of the spheres of Art. To illustrate our idea more distinctly, we will only point to the pictorial inferences of some of these special historical works to which we have alluded. Take, for instance, a history of woman, and fancy an artist illustrating the appearance of woman of past centuries and of the present century, in all the splendor and variety which the manners and costumes of different eras of taste and different classes of society suggest. Good old Queen Bertha, with her thrifty distaff; pompous Madame de Pompadour, with her glittering jewelry; pious Madame de Maintenon, with her elegant prayer-book, and many other types of virtue, vice, fashion, and piety in high life, might be easily borrowed from the annals of history and brought upon the canvas, along with types of women in other spheres of life—the fisherman's daughters of Italy, the shepherdesses of Spain, the dairymaid of the Swiss chalet, the ambulating female Tyrolese peddler and the poor Irish servant-girl, kneeling at the shrine of the holy Virgin; the German girl of the Rhineland, gathering grapes, the Swabian and Bavarian girls, attending the village ball;

the Viennese, belle waltzing with rapturous delight; the girls of Avignon and Lyons, feeding the silkworm; the poor peasant woman of the German Odenwald, driving the ox into the farmhouse; the skillful French female artist, designing porcelain at Sèvres, or tapestry in the Gobelins; the Dutch girl, chatting with her sailor-bean at the snug little quay of Delft; the Scotch lass, on her first visit to London; the English lady-in-waiting, doomed to stand on gala opera night behind the chair of the queen; the gathering of poor and abandoned women along Holborn and Smithfield (London), around coffee-stands during the night; the English horsewoman, on a spree at the Derby; the English female tourist, condescending to admire the ruins of the Rhine in accordance with the thirty-nine articles of Murray's handbook; Dutch ladies, skating with clumsy grace upon the Amstel; and the various manifestations of woman's life in this, and many other countries might even at the present day furnish the groundwork of suggestive comparisons. And how much more would this be the case if historians were to come forward to give us truthful expositions of the life of women and men of past ages, as well of the present times, of all classes, and conditions of society. The services which artists are capable of rendering to the world by associating their mission with that of historians, by giving luminous representations of the realities of life, have, in our opinion, never yet been properly appreciated.

We conclude this first glance at the new historical movement by calling attention to its organ, published at Nuremberg, since 1856 (*Zeitschrift für deutsche Culturgeschichte*). Also to a union for the promotion of the new branch of investigation, which has been in operation in Weimar since 1857, and which counts already several hundred members in all parts of Germany. Its aim is to collect materials which throw light upon the past and present condition of all classes of society. Considering how mean and unsatisfactory even the best of such vestiges are, would it not be well for us to be wiser than our forefathers, and leave to our posterity literary and artistic monuments which shall act as recording angels of our political and public institutions, of the conflicting occupations, passions, joys and sorrows, follies and wisdoms, wickednesses and charities of the American elements of the 19th. century?

Those who do not care what truths they abuse or desecrate, in order to buttress up some favorite position, resemble the Athenians whom Thucydides describes as building up the walls of their city with masonry pillaged from its temples and shrines.

The Duke of Guise, in the war between Henry II. of France and the Emperor Charles V., levelled churches, monasteries, etc., for the defence of Metz, in Lorraine, but with religious ceremonies, that he might avoid the charge of impiety. (Robertson.)—*Boyes*.

THE hours we pass with happy prospects in view are more pleasing than those crowned with fruition. "In the first case," as Goldsmith says, "we cook the dish to our own appetite, in the latter nature cooks it for us."—*Digby*.